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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WAYNE PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

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¶1. (SBU) On Friday, January 19, Ambassador presented his credentials to Argentine Vice President Scioli in the Casa Rosada. A twenty minute discussion with the Vice President was focused on trade and investment, exchanges, and the shifting political landscape in Latin America. Highlights of the discussion included:

¶2. (SBU) U.S. - Argentine Relations: Scioli said he was positively impressed by the recent activism of the U.S. embassy. The Ambassador said that he had been warmly received by ministers and by the private sector in Argentina and that he found a great deal of enthusiasm for building cooperation and pursuing new opportunities between Argentina and the U.S. Scioli agreed that there were many opportunities and cited tourism and high tech as two areas of growth in U.S.-Argentine relations, which he thought should continue to expand in the future.

¶3. (SBU) Meeting with Secretary Gutierrez: Scioli said he had enjoyed his conversation with Commerce Secretary Gutierrez at the presidential inauguration in Quito. He said he felt Secretary Gutierrez was a friend of Latin America and of Argentina. Scioli said he was very interested in the Atlanta Competitiveness Forum, which the Secretary will be hosting in June. The Ambassador reiterated the goals and objectives of the Forum and underscored U.S. interest in having a good Argentine team there and in producing good results which can help the hemisphere compete well with other high performing regions.

¶4. (SBU) Trade: Scioli said that he hoped that the U.S. would be creative in supporting increased trade and investment in the region, not being overly wedded to the FTAA format, especially given the many democracies in the region. The Ambassador said the U.S. wanted to expand trade and investment in the region and globally. He briefed the VP on ongoing efforts to make progress in the WTO round as well as the upcoming visit to Argentina and the region by Deputy USTR Veroneau.

¶5. (SBU) Democracy: Ambassador argued that support for democracy was very important in the region at this time and that Argentina's position as a well-functioning democracy had become more important. In this sense, Argentina and Brazil can play an important role in the region in fostering democracy as well as supporting pragmatic policies. Scioli agreed that the strategic situation offered Argentina increased opportunities to play a positive role in its neighborhood.

¶6. (SBU) Exchanges: The Ambassador also stressed the importance of increasing people to people exchanges and work with youth and education. Scioli agreed heartily and argued for including sports exchanges as a key part of youth outreach.

¶7. (SBU) Local Politics: Ambassador asked Scioli about his emerging campaign for governor of Buenos Aires province. The Vice President said he was enjoying himself and believed that his earlier experience as provincial secretary for tourism and sports gave him a good knowledge of the province and its needs. He said he felt that he could do a great deal to help attract new business to the province as well as to strengthen its educational and physical infrastructure.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Citing a GOA source, the press reported that Ambassador had talked about "the positive influence in the region of the leadership" of President Kirchner. The Ambassador only talked about the positive influence which Argentina could have in the region.

WAYNE